



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1999/NGO/8
29 January 1999

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fifth session
Item 12 (a) of the provisional agenda

INTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND THE
GENDER PERSPECTIVE: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Written statement submitted by Christian Solidarity
International, a non-governmental organization on
the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement,
which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.

[14 January 1999]

Slavery and rape of women and girls in the Sudan

1. Christian Solidarity International (CSI) submits this statement on the strength of over 20 visits to the Sudan - the most recent from 7 to 14 January 1999 - to investigate, *inter alia*, slavery in the Sudan. Since October 1995, CSI's Slave Redemption Programme in southern Sudan has freed over 5,000 slaves, the majority of whom are women, young girls and children. In interviews with the victims of slavery and their families, CSI has accumulated overwhelming evidence of the terrible trauma inflicted on these women who must endure not only the pain of being forcibly removed from their homes, but the utter humiliation and loss of dignity occasioned by sexual abuse from the National Islamic Front (NIF) - supported by armed raiders and the masters to whom they are eventually sold.
2. The resurgence of slavery in the Sudan is directly related to the imposition of radical Islamism and the totalitarian ideology of jihad ("holy war") since 1992 by the NIF-controlled Government of Sudan (GOS). Slave raids, together with conventional warfare, are among the means used by the GOS to carry out its avowed policy of the enforced Islamization and Arabization of the entire country by literally tearing apart the fabric of southern and Nuba Mountain communities.
3. The violence perpetrated against women which this policy implies is traumatic in the extreme. Captured in their tens of thousands, these women and their children, mostly from northern Bahr el Ghazal and the Nuba Mountains, are deemed "infidels" and hence regarded as war booty by their captors. Divided from their families they are bought, sold, and delivered into the hands of their owners, to be used and abused to perform domestic labour and sexual services. Many of the victims are given Muslim names, forced to abandon their own cultural identity, and, in some cases, subjected to ritual genital mutilation. Failure to conform leads to severe beatings.
4. Interviews with slaves freed by CSI reveal a depressing pattern of abuse. In September 1998, Nanut Marac Bul, a 25-year-old mother enslaved in May 1992 from the village of Angot, told CSI:

"The Murahaleen came at night while I was sleeping. ... A man wearing a jellabeya came inside and tied my hands with a rope. I was forced to walk for about 9 days, until we reached Karega. On the way I was forced to perform sexual acts with Jima. He was the one who caught me. Jima sold me to Mohammed, who took me to his home in Tabun. Many members of my family were also caught in the raid, but we were separated, and I never saw them again. I had to cook and do different jobs around the house. Mohammed had an Arab wife, but he used me as a concubine. He would come to me at night ... I have two of his children." 1/
5. Equally distressing is the fate of the "State slaves" held in State-run concentration camps (referred to by the GOS as "peace villages") in Government-controlled areas of Sudan. There, the children are separated from their mothers and compelled to attend militant Koranic schools, in order to be indoctrinated in NIF ideology, while the women are sent to work as unpaid day labourers in private homes or on farms.

6. CSI's extensive documentation of slavery in the Sudan from numerous Arab and Dinka sources includes the evidence of former State slaves such as Rebecca Ayuen Deng, who was captured by members of the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) near Nyamlell during the NIF offensive of May 1998. First she was taken, along with many others, to Nyamlell where the Commissioner of Ed Daien (Abdelrahman Kidder) had the abducted persons videoed. From there she was sent to the Khor Omer camp (officially referred to as the Asaliah Camp) which, according to Deng:

"... is guarded by the PDF security men, and is controlled by the Governor of Dafur (El Hajj Adam Yousef) and the Commissioner of Ed Daien. They invited an organization called Dawa Islamiyya to run the camp. The Dawa Islamiyya people were all Arabs ... The children have to stay at the khalwa (Koranic school). The women are taken to farms to work in the field, or to homes to do cleaning and laundry. Some of the women said that others were shot dead when they tried to escape. ... People were treated very badly in the camp. Some were beaten. ..." 2/

7. As a direct consequence of the war, some 4 million Sudanese are internally displaced, 3/ thus providing an enormous pool of vulnerable, defenceless people of whom the majority are women, young girls and children. These large displaced populations in the Sudan are not only a by-product of the war but constitute part of a two-pronged government strategy: since the late 1970s, economic policy in the Sudan has emphasized the replacement of subsistence farming with capital-intensive, mechanized means of production. This emphasis on large-scale agriculture dovetails with the creation of "peace villages", where women are used as a source of cheap agricultural labour. Furthermore, by removing these women and children from their own indigenous cultures the GOS facilitates their conversion to Islam.

8. This policy is taking place "with the knowledge of the GOS", as was first confirmed by Mr. Gáspár Bíró in his 1995 interim report to the General Assembly (A/50/569, paras. 74(a) and 75). In introducing his 1995 report to the Commission on Human Rights on 16 April 1996, Mr. Bíró concluded: "We have reached a stage where the facts are no longer debatable." He reaffirmed this in April 1998 when presenting to the Commission his last report on the situation of human rights in the Sudan.

9. Evidence clearly suggests that the practice of slave-taking, the sale of victims to private households or impoundment in labour camps, and the incidents of sexual violence committed against enslaved women in accordance with government policy constitute crimes against humanity, within the meaning of article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (adopted by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on 17 July 1998), which provides that:

"1. For the purpose of this Statute, 'crime against humanity' means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack: ...

"(c) Enslavement;

"(d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population;

"(g) Rape, sexual slavery, ... forced pregnancy, ... or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity; ..."

10. In accordance with recent law, as set down in Prosecutor v. Dusko Tadic (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Case No. IT-94-1-T, paras. 618-660), for an act to be a crime against humanity it must take place within the context of armed conflict and be committed against the civilian population on a widespread or systematic fashion on racial, religious, ethnic or political grounds pursuant to a recognizable policy. CSI submits that an armed conflict does exist in the relevant territory as it has at all pertinent times and that an aspect of this conflict is the intent to commit acts of enslavement and rape against the women of southern and Nuban tribes within the GOS's aim of creating an Arab-Islamic State.

11. Crimes against humanity are punishable as crimes under international law and any person who commits an act which constitutes a crime under international law is, therefore, responsible and liable to punishment. As the facts are now irrefutable, CSI calls upon the international community to condemn, as a matter of urgency, the brutal enslavement and rape being perpetrated against vulnerable women, and to bring to justice those responsible for these crimes. In the words of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan: "There can be no global justice unless the worst of crimes - crimes against humanity - are subject to the law." 4/

12. CSI calls upon the United Nations and its Member States to:

(a) Condemn in the strongest terms the crimes against humanity committed by agents of the Government of the Sudan, acting with its knowledge, consent or express approval;

(b) Activate the existing United Nations mechanisms and procedures in order to bring to an end the grave violations of human rights in the Sudan, including urgent measures to prevent further cases of slavery, slave-trading in women, young girls and children, and rape;

(c) Establish without delay, under the auspices of UNICEF, a programme to retrieve slaves along the lines of the largely successful family reunification programme (including unaccompanied minors) launched by this agency in southern Sudan in the early 1990s;

(d) Compel the GOS to bring to justice the perpetrators of these crimes.

13. Reiterating its urgent appeal to the High Commissioner for Human Rights of 2 December 1998, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, CSI appeals to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights to take

all the necessary and urgent steps to stop immediately the ongoing crimes against humanity being committed by agents of the Government of Sudan, especially the enslavement and sexual degradation of women and young girls, which are among the cruellest and most blatant crimes against humanity.

Notes

- 1/ CSI trip report, 5-10 September 1998.
- 2/ CSI trip report, 25-31 October 1998.
- 3/ Dr. J. Millard Burr, Quantifying Genocide in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains 1983-1998.
- 4/ In a message to the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, 17 July 1998.
